

## THE STYLE IN FEATHERS.

The Plumage Women Will Wear on Their Hats and Bonnets This Winter.

Parisian Milliners Have Decreed That This Should be a "Black" Year in Millinery.

How Feathers are Made—Who Does the Ornamenting Work—American Birds That Are Used.

It is just the season now when the feather woman is in all her glory, says the New York Herald. Grim and sedate she watches the flying fingers of the workers swiftly fashioning feminine headgear. This is to be a great year for feathers. Merchants and manufacturers rub their hands in delight as they think of the profits. It is the tail end of their season now.

Fashion's fiat of what is right for the winter hat goes forth in Paris late in the spring. Then the Parisian milliners decree that this should be a "black" year. So the hat of the season is a rather sombre one. Yet for those of gayer taste lighter shades have been devised. The motif for many of these has been the exhibition of the summer. One of the most popular of colors, so it is said, will be the Eifel—a brownish red that is almost a brown, the color of the great tower. The "Buffalo" is a light brown, yet darker than the Eifel and without its tinge of red, so named in honor of Col. Cody's Wild West. There is the "Luminous," imitating the shade of green used this summer in illuminating the waters of Paris. Others are the "Ebernia," a shade of yellow, red, grading from the iris to the camellia, not of the tinge of the flower, though, and some dainty shades of emerald green.

The first process in the fitting of the feather for commercial use is that of dying. There is very little that appears in its natural color. The shades and tints one sees are for the most part artificial, and the gradations of color produced by one portion of the feather taking the dye better than another. Even the plumage of the blackbird needs to go through the dying vats. There it is changed from a blue black into a jet. Practically the only black plumage left unchanged is that of the velvet bird, the most expensive of all in use, a single specimen selling for \$10. The owl, with his soft brown and gray, is often left in his native state. The plumage of water fowl—the duck and the gull—will not take the dye. The color slides off just as water does.

Since the most of the feathers are dyed sober plumage birds are as good for the purpose as gay colored ones, and they are much cheaper. A great proportion of the birds used are those of the market whose plumage, head and wings are sold by manufacturers to milliners. Practically no American song birds are destroyed for the sake of their feathers alone, and there are only a few foreign and tropical birds killed whose flesh cannot be eaten. Thus the plea of the Audubon Society that women should spare the birds by refusing to wear feathers in their hat lacks point.

The American feathers are those of the grouse, partridge and quail, the mallard duck, snipe and gull, the snowbird, high-bird and swallows—to mention those most in use. From the southern plantations comes the rice or cedar bird, destroyed in large quantities, since he plays such havoc with the rice fields. There is also the white Florida heron, from which and the South American bird of paradise comes that long, delicate, curling feather known as the egret. The domestic canary is never used, for the simple commercial reason that he is worth 12½ cents dead and \$1.50 living. Russia sends the Pionakin in the glossy black tresses, of the partridge type; Germany the grieb, a kind of duck, and the sparrow in great quantities; India a gay colored bird or two, and South America a troupe of parrots. London and Leipzig are the great bird markets of the world, though Paris, from her being the seat of the designing, is rising in prominence.

The bird "skin" arrives stuffed with cotton and cured by arsenical means, is divided into head, wings, tail and breast—the "plumage" being placed into a coloring vat. Aniline colors are used and the bath is of days' or hours' duration, as the case may be. The parts are then dried, strung on strings in a hot room or the open air. To dye a gray or light brown feather a lighter color a process known as "degradation" is employed.

To "degrade" or "degrady," as the milliners say, the original color is extracted in a bath of chloride of lime or acid until the feather is of the color of light brown paper. Then it will take any darker tint. For the lightest shades a white feather must be used, and if a white effect is wanted even the white feather cannot be used in its original state. It must first be carefully bleached.

The grand divisions in the feather trade are ostrich and fancy feathers. The term "fancy feathers" is applied to the innumerable combinations of head, wings, plumage, tail and skirt. It is made up of their base to a bit of black paper attached to a wire and known as a "pad." There are hundreds of different designs and arrangements of color and form.

The salesroom of a large manufactory is filled with long, low tables, piled up with big pasteboard boxes, "cartons," brown, trimmed with yellow and lined with white, as is the tradition of the trade. The array of shades and shapes is bewildering. In what are called "bird effects" half of the head is used, set back on the "pad" against an arrangement of wings, tail and breast. The owl's head stares out from amid silky feathers. Little "hummers"—one, two or three of them—in their natural state, with a faint tinging of color, are set against a background of black. Pretty effects are those of the Japanese thrush, with his curious mottled brown and gray, against some dark plumage and wings, and the red and yellow of the Baltimore oriole with a black agrette of the bird of Paradise.

The agrette is to be much in vogue this year. Colored in every tint it will be worn in the hair as well as on the hat, then set off by a cluster of diamonds. In "black" parrots, colored to a glossy jet, are the most in demand. Magpies, owls and sparrows are very popular. In fact every arrangement carried out in colors is reproduced in the black, and here are the costliest and the finest feathers of all. Special arrangements are the pompon, a side piece of a round hanging nature, the monture a bunch like combination of trimmings, and the band a string of small feathers pasted sideways on a long strip. The latter is very much in vogue now, wound about the turban.

In ostrich feathers after they are dyed and dried, there are three distinct stages of manufacture. The "sorters" put size with size, the "bunchers" make up the feather, cutting sideways through the quill, leaving two perfect sections and backing up these with parts and portions of others to make a symmetrical shape. The ostrich feather is seldom available in its natural form. The "curlers" with their curling knives complete the process, curling being an art of much dexterity and skill. The skillful curler is always sure of her work and of excellent pay.

Feather making is a woman's trade after the feathers leave the dying room, which is

solely in charge of men. It is one of the best of women's trades, for dexterity and daintiness are always at a high premium, as women's wages go.

The experts throughout the season average \$25 a week, and from here the earnings grade all the way down to the little girl beginner, who are paid \$1.50 a week. Most of the feather workers are also flower makers, and become as expert at one class of work as the other. The season of each lasts six months, and in most of the manufactory the two businesses are combined and the women's work of employment throughout the year. Much has been written within the last twelve months about the hardships of the feather girls and the way their pay is scaled down. It undoubtedly is in some instances, but the truth is skilled labor here, as elsewhere, receives its due, and the unskilled and ordinary worker has a hard struggle of it. In the many feather establishments of the better class the clever women are rewarded as well as clever women are anywhere.

For chapped hands, roughness of the skin, pimples or blotches of any kind on the face or other parts of the body, apply Dutard's Specific. It works like magic and is warranted by druggists. Sold by R. S. Hale & Co., wholesale and retail druggists, Helena.

There was a terrible epidemic of dysentery and bloody flux in Pope county, Illinois, last summer. As many as five deaths occurred in one day. Messrs. Walter Brothers, of Waltersburg, sold over 380 bottles of Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy during this epidemic, and say they never heard of its failing in any case when the directions were followed. It was the only medicine used that did cure the worst cases. Many persons were cured by it after the doctors had given them up. Twenty-five and 50-cent bottles for sale by H. M. Parthen & Co.

## Winter Excursions to California.

On the 15th day of every month the Northern Pacific Railway company will sell excursion tickets to San Francisco and return at \$75; to Los Angeles and return \$94. These tickets have an extreme limit of six months from date of issuance and can be used going any time within sixty (60) days from date of sale. Stop over permitted at any point desired—either going or returning—within limit of ticket. Excursionists have choice of two routes from Portland—by steamer, or by rail, via the famous Mount Shasta route.

Bear in mind that the Northern Pacific is the only line running through sleeping and dining cars to the Pacific coast.

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